



Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

News

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First Judicial Circuit wins award For immediate release Friday, August 20, 2010

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – First Judicial Circuit Judge Martin J. Gaughan and Brooke County Chief Probation Officer Jim Lee were recently recognized for the success of the Northern Panhandle Treatment Courts program they helped create.

They were given an award at the National Criminal Justice Association (NCJA) Forum on August 3, 2010, in Fort Myers, Florida, for the Best Criminal Justice Program in the Southern Region. There are four regional winners each year, and this was the first time a program in West Virginia was recognized.

“It’s gratifying for everyone in the judicial system that the pioneering work of Judge Gaughan and Jim Lee is being recognized beyond the state’s borders. We know that because of their leadership we are doing great work, but it’s always pleasant when other people notice,” said Supreme Court Administrative Director Steve Canterbury, who along with Judge Gaughan and Mr. Lee is considered one of the founders of community corrections in West Virginia.

Norbert Federspiel, West Virginia Division of Criminal Justice Services Director, nominated the Northern Panhandle Treatment Courts and Judge Gaughan and Mr. Lee because of the community corrections effort they have led across the state and its focus on treatment courts.

“Our community corrections probably wouldn’t exist without them, or at least would be crippled without what they have done,” said Mr. Federspiel.

In the awards program, the description of the Northern Panhandle program reads: “By providing alternatives to incarceration, the Northern Panhandle Treatment Court and Program is able to help rehabilitate and reintegrate a variety of offenders into the community where they can lead positive, constructive lives that benefit themselves and society.”

In 2004, West Virginia’s first Mental Health Court was opened in the First Judicial Circuit, followed by a Drug and DUI Court in 2006. In 2009, a Reentry Court was established. Later this year, a Juvenile Drug Court will open there.

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“This award is the result of the entire community including judges, prosecutors, and county commissioners working together for over ten years to create a criminal justice program that protects the community and changes the lives of everyone involved in the system,” said Judge Gaughan.

“This would be a great way to end my forty-year career in community corrections, but Judge Gaughan said I can’t retire yet,” Mr. Lee said with a smile. Over the last several years Mr. Lee said more than forty organizations have visited the First Judicial Circuit to model its system.

Nominees for the award are reviewed by NCJA staff and other state administrative agencies. Award-winning programs are those that showcase successful promising practices in criminal justice and can be easily replicated, address important criminal justice issues, demonstrate effectiveness based upon the programs’ stated goals, and are good examples of the use of federal funds to initiate a program that is subsequently supported through state and local funds. Programs also may be self-sustaining.

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